

## **Proclamation 3444 - Homestead Centennial Year**

*January 5, 1962*

*By the President of the United States of America*

*Whereas* May 20, 1962, marks the centennial of the enactment of the Homestead Act (12 Stat. 392), approved by President Lincoln, inducing settlement and cultivation of the undeveloped public lands and the establishment of homes thereon; and

*Whereas* the granting of patents to more than 270 million acres of public domain lands has promoted the economic, social, and political development of this country through the establishment of farms, ranches, and communities and has provided the foundation for our highly productive agricultural economy; and

*Whereas* the Homestead Act and supplemental acts of Congress, which are unique and distinctively American, stand as a tribute to the wisdom of those responsible for their enactment, in providing for the settlement of the public lands and thereby contributing to our free enterprise system by offering landless and laboring people an opportunity to acquire lands to provide for the needs of their families; and

*Whereas* the Homestead Act and supplemental acts provide for the further recognition of those who have served in the armed forces of the United States; and

*Whereas* specific Federal administration of the lands of the public domain began one hundred and fifty years ago with the establishment on April 25, 1812, of the General Land Office, now the Bureau of Land Management in the Department of the Interior, and the development of the West has been coextensive with, and based substantially upon, the acquisition, use, and disposal of these lands; and

*Whereas* the Nation's public lands have contributed to the development and maintenance of the land-grant colleges and universities and the transcontinental and other railroads; and constitute the resource from which our national forest and park systems have been created; and

*Whereas* the approximately 477 million acres of public domain, under the administration of the Department of the Interior, constitute a vital and necessary national land reserve, a trust dedicated to the greatest use and benefit of the public; and

*Whereas* the Congress, by a joint resolution approved September 22, 1961 (75 Stat. 571), has requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the calendar year 1962 as the centennial of the enactment of the Homestead Act:

*Now, Therefore, I, John F. Kennedy*, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the year 1962 as Homestead Centennial Year.

I call upon the Governors of the States, mayors of cities, and other public officials, as well as other persons, organizations, and groups, particularly in the States most directly affected by the Homestead Act, to observe such centennial by appropriate celebrations and ceremonies.

I request the Department of the Interior to plan and participate in appropriate commemorative activities recognizing the centennial of the enactment of the Homestead Act and the sesquicentennial of the establishment of the General Land Office; and I also request the Department of the Interior and other

Federal agencies to cooperate fully with State and local governments during 1962 in commemorating these events.

*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this fifth, day of January in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and eighty-sixth.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "John F. Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

JOHN F. KENNEDY